



Office of the Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 1998

Chairman Dan Burton
Committee on Government Reform and Oversight
2157 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515-6143

Dear Chairman Burton,

I was deeply troubled by the partisan Democrat behavior shown last week during the vote on granting immunity -to which even the Justice Department is not opposed — to four key witnesses in your campaign finance investigation.

This is the exact opposite of previous congressional investigations, in which Republican Members worked in a diligent and bipartisan manner with Democrats to uncover the truth. According to David Dorsen, the assistant chief counsel of the Senate Watergate Committee, the “Watergate Committee voted consistently and unanimously for immunity.” In fact, even during Iran-Contra the Congressional investigative committees voted unanimously to grant a limited form of immunity to Oliver North, John Poindexter and Albert Hakim. There is no logical reason for the Democrats’ stonewalling and sharply partisan actions. Again, even the Department of Justice has clearly stated in writing that they have “no opposition to the Committee granting immunity.”

The Democrats’ efforts to block immunity — despite their own administration’s willingness to accept it — cannot withstand the public’s demand for the truth. For this reason, I encourage you to vote again on the immunity issue. It is obvious that these four witnesses would provide a great deal of clarification and a better understanding of the illegal campaign finance irregularities that took place in the 1996 election cycle.

The American people have a right to know exactly what happened during the last election cycle. The very foundations of a democracy are a well-informed populace with the right to know the truth and a rule of law ensuring that all are equal in the eyes of justice. Therefore, at this time I strongly urge you to hold a second vote on granting immunity to the four key witnesses who were denied it last week.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Newt".

Newt Gingrich
Speaker of the House